

KEY POINTS ON FALLS PREVENTION IN KY

- In a given year, 1 in 3 older adults (65+) will experience a fall.
- Falls are the leading cause of injury and injury-related deaths for seniors
- Falls are the leading cause for trauma-related hospital admission for older adults
- Falls jeopardize the health and independence of older adults
- The risk of being seriously injured in a fall increases with age
- On average 155 Kentuckians age 65 and older die each year as a result of a fall
- Hospital charges for fall-related inpatient hospitalization involving Kentucky residents age 65 and older were over 266 million dollars in 2011 - and increase of 275% since 2003.
- The fear of falling is a common sentiment among those 65 and older. This leads to decreased activity, decreased independence, and social isolation; all factors that increase the risk of a fall.
- Internal Risk Factors for Falling Include:
 - Normal age-related changes (e.g., *vision problems, weaker muscle strength, poor balance, gait problems*)
 - Neurological/Cognitive Disorders (e.g. *gait disorders, stroke, Parkinson's disease, Multiple Sclerosis, traumatic brain injury*)
 - Disease/Medical problems linked to a physical condition (e.g. *heart problems, diabetes, circulatory disease, depression, arthritis, postural hypotension, gastrointestinal problems, reactions to medicine*)
- External Risk Factors for Falling Include:
 - A persons physical environment
 - Reaction to medication
 - Reaction to alcohol
 - Footwear
 - Vision impairments
 - Unsafe home environments
 - Lack of physical activity/exercise
- On a typical day in the commonwealth accidental falls among seniors result in approximately 67 emergency room visits, 21 hospitalizations, and 10 hip fractures.
- Falls have a wide array of economic and quality of life cost - BUT they are preventable.
- Falls data specific to each county in Kentucky is available here:
<http://www.safekentucky.org>

